

BRAIDED PONYTAIL LOOPS WITH UNBRAIDED DECORATED ENDS**Description****Background of the Invention****Field of the Invention**

5 The present invention relates to decorative hair fasteners and particularly to a decorative ponytail cord device that comprises a braided double loop secured around the ponytail by an adjustable sliding bead or cord lock with loose unbraided ends embellished with beads hanging down the ponytail.

Description of the Prior Art

10 Many women with long or medium length hair wear their hair in a ponytail for reasons of styling or convenience. Many people like to secure their hair up and away from their face in various styles. One way to put the hair up is to use an elasticized hair band or elastic (rubber) band. Traditionally, a hair band formed into a loop is secured around a section of hair. Hair bands often become loose and less supportive over time due
15 to the loss of elasticity. The bands are often unattractive, as in the case of an elastic (rubber) band or minimally decorated, is in the case of some hair bands. Many decorative hair fasteners have been provided such as conventional ribbons, which have been used for this purpose for many years. Hair strings have also been made of a thin piece of rawhide with beads at the ends held in place by knots. The decorative elements do not hold the
20 hair in place effectively and tend to slip off.

 None of the prior art devices provide a strong double loop braided cord straddling an elastic band around the ponytail (for added holding power) with multiple unbraided decorated ends hanging down on top of the ponytail.

Prior art U.S. Patent #5,778,904, issued 7/14/1998 to Elsner, provides a hair tie fastener that has an elastomeric cord formed into a loop by passing the terminal ends of the cord through a compression spring actuated cord lock. A stop bead positioned on the loop prevents the loop end of the elastomeric cord from inadvertently being removed from the cord lock. Pendant beads affixed to the terminal ends of the cord prevent the cord from inadvertently being pulled out of the cord lock.

Prior art U.S. Patent #6,182,672, issued 2/6/2001 to Abasta-Douglas, claims a looped fastener decorative hair tie or quick tie hair cinch. The hair tie comprises a looped fastener having a fabric covered elasticized member having a thin, substantially rectangular cross-sectional configuration having terminal ends formed in a loop by passing the elasticized member through a hollow open-ended decorative body. The looped fastener is tightened and loosened by moving the open-ended body up and down the fabric covered elasticized member. Secondary open-ended bodies affixed to the terminal ends of the fabric covered elasticized member prevent the elasticized member from accidentally being pulled out of the aforementioned open-ended body.

Prior art U.S. Patent #6,076,532, issued 6/20/2000 to Thomas, concerns a combination head/hair band and the hair gathering device(s) comprised of two or more joined flexible textile loops featuring adjustable circumferences. The first loop is intended to wrap around the user's head and serve as a head/hair band. The second loop or loops is/are attached to the primary loop at the location(s) from which gathered hair, i.e. ponytail/pigtails/hair braid(s), are intended to be secured. The gathered hair is routed through the second loop(s) and secured by tensioning of slide device(s) defining the loop

circumferences. In the one embodiment, a single length of a flexible textile cordage is routed over the wearers head and both ends are then routed through a first slide device positioned underneath the hair at the back of the head. The hair is then gathered and the cord ends are routed around opposite sides of the gathered hair, and tensioned and
5 secured with a second slide device.

Prior art U.S. Patent #6,213,130, issued 4/10/2001 to Alessandrino, shows a ponytail hair style applied by a user without assistance by reaching behind and performing all of the steps by feel, using a slip knot to establish the ponytail and encircle it in helical turns within ties extending from the slip knot and joined at free ends just
10 beyond the last helical turn by the insertion of a display object on one tie in a closed loop of elastic on the other tie. A ponytail-engaging component is provided that comprises a lasso loop with a decorative slide for tightening the lasso loop around the ponytail.

Prior art U.S. Patent #6,601,589, issued 8/5/2003 to Ericks, discloses a hair tie and fastener device that has a cord formed into a loop, with one end of the cord stopping
15 at the loop and the other end extending outward. The short end is formed into or connected to a restraining mechanism, which controls reversible movement of the longer portion of the cord. The restraining feature may be a noose or slipknot formed into the cord, a keeper plate for use with a compressible cord or a spring-biased pawl mechanism. Movement from a hair-grasping position to a hair-releasing position is thus enabled.

20 Prior art U.S. Patent #6,397,857, issued 6/4/2002 to Neary, is for a hair accessory for a woman's hair. The hair accessory includes a includes an elongated rectangularly shaped elastic strap having an inner elongated surface foldable back on itself so as to

form a P-shaped hoop in cross section and an outer elongate surface (opposite to the inner surface) to which a series of beaded strings are attached. The P-shaped hoop includes an upright arm and an arcuate arm that intersects the upright arm over a segment of inner elongated surface. As a result, the arcuate arm forms a closed cavity (that incorporates a segment of the inner surface of the strap) so as to enclose a strand of hair of the user yet is flexible to allow radial expansion as required. A portion of the upright arm of the P-shaped hoop is used to support beaded strings. When the strap is folded back upon itself and the P-shaped hoop is formed, disconnectable attachment means positioned on the inner surface provides for disconnectable attachment creates the P-shaped hoop. The shape of the hoop is initially ellipsoidal but stretchable into a more circular shape. A method of use is also described.

Prior art U.S. Patent #D443,724, issued 6/12/2001 to Neary, puts forth the ornamental design for a crystal or beaded elasticized hair band with tails. The hair band is made from a piece of clear elastic band with crystals or beads being attached when strung onto that band. The hair band can be used like a rubber band or ponytail holder, by looping it two or three times around the hair, until secure.

Prior art U.S. Patent Application #20010050090, published 12/13/2001 by Neary, concerns a hair accessory for a woman's hair. The hair accessory includes an elongated rectangularly shaped elastic strap having an inner elongated surface foldable back on itself so as to form a P-shaped hoop in cross section and an outer elongate surface (opposite to the inner surface) to which a series of beaded strings are attached. The P-shaped hoop includes an upright arm and an arcuate arm that intersects the upright arm

over a segment of inner elongated surface. As a result, the arcuate arm forms a closed cavity (that incorporates a segment of the inner surface of the strap) so as to enclose a strand of hair of the user yet is flexible to allow radial expansion as required. A portion of the upright arm of the P-shaped hoop is used to support beaded strings. When the strap is folded back upon itself and the P-shaped hoop is formed, disconnectable attachment means positioned on the inner surface provides for disconnectable attachment creates the P-shaped hoop. The shape of the hoop is initially ellipsoidal but stretchable into a more circular shape. A method of use is also described.

Prior art U.S. Patent #537,542, issued 4/16/1895 to Moore, provides a hair fastener that comprises a band or pad through which a cord is doubly threaded. Both ends of the cord exit the pad through an eyelet and ring and are tightened by an adjustable sliding rubber clip.

Prior art U.S. Patent #5,472,003, issued 12/5/1995 to Frame, indicates a hair retainer that holds a ponytail of a user while selectively covering any desired portion of the ponytail. The preferred embodiment is a sleeve that has a top loop, which may include a tie, proximate one end near the head of a user to gather the hair and secure the ponytail. A bottom loop, secured to gather the opposite end of the sleeve, restrains the hair of the ponytail. The bottom loop also grips the hair to position the bottom loop and set the effective length of the sleeve relative to the ponytail. The tie may comprise an elastic material. A plurality of gathers may be distributed along the sleeve around the circumference of the sleeve, positioning and blousing the sleeve between gathers, and between the top and bottom loops. The sleeve may assist in isolating the hair from

contamination and damage in medical and industrial environments, and from interference with work by hair falling into a user's face. The sleeve may also assist in reducing contamination of controlled environments such as hospitals, precision mechanical and electronic manufacturing rooms, clean-rooms, and food preparation sites by hair and dust and from electrostatic discharge. An alternate embodiment of the invention uses a cord threaded through the top loop and is secured by a cord lock, which may also have baubles attached to the elastics threaded through the top loop, the baubles acting as a cord pull to tighten the elastic.

Prior art U.S. Patent #D434,184, issued 11/21/2000 to Acker, describes the ornamental design for a hair accessory, which has a decorative slide for tightening a cord around a ponytail and decorative cords that dangle from the slide.

What is needed is a strong pair of braided cords interconnected in the middle of the cords to form a double loop secured by a cord lock around the ponytail with each braided cord of the double loop straddling an elastic band around the ponytail with one braided strand on each side of the elastic band and multiple decorated unbraided ends hanging down from each strand on top of the ponytail.

Summary of the Invention

An object of the present invention is to provide a strong pair of braided ponytail cords interconnected in the middle of the cords to form a double loop secured by a cord lock around the ponytail with each braided cord of the double loop straddling an elastic band around the ponytail with one braided strand on each side of the elastic band and multiple decorated unbraided ends hanging down from each strand on top of the ponytail.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a decorative ponytail device, which may be braided with cords of various colors and be embellished with decorative elements that may accessorize with existing outfits.

One more object of the present invention to provide a decorative ponytail device,
5 which may be braided with each strand of the braided cord being a different color.

An additional object of the present invention is to provide variously sized, variously textured, and variously colored beads or other decorative elements each having a slide opening for each unbraided cord end.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a securing means to bind a
10 cord lock releasably to the pair of braided cords, which may comprise a spring-loaded release button.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a decorative element on an interconnecting strand located at the top of the braided cords.

In brief, a decorative ponytail holder that comprises a pair of braided cords
15 interconnected in the middle of the cords to form a double loop secured around a ponytail by a cord lock. The cords are interconnected by one or more connecting strands, which may have one or more decorative elements thereon. Each braided cord of the double loop straddles an elastic band or hair band around the ponytail with one braided strand on each side of the band to assist in holding the ponytail and maintaining both elements in place
20 around the ponytail. The braided cord ends pass through a cord lock and then are individually knotted partway down, thereby leaving a number of single loose unbraided ends hanging down for each braided strand. Usually there are 3 or 4 loose unbraided

ends, depending on the type of braid, for each end of a braided strand so that a single braided strand has six or eight loose unbraided ends. The multiple unbraided ends hang down from the knot at each braided cord end and lay on top of the ponytail. The multiple unbraided ends may be embellished with decorative elements, such as beads or other ornamentation having openings to receive the cord end, which would be retained in place by a knot at the end of each single unbraided strand.

The braided cord may be made from a variety of materials, colors, textures, lengths, thicknesses, weights, and patterns. The braided cords may comprise different colored individual strands or having all strands the same color. The decorative elements each have a strand or cord receiving opening and may be provided in a variety of visually different variations of sizes, shapes, colors, textures, and materials.

A primary advantage of the present invention is that it provides multiple decorative ends for each braided strand forming a loop around a ponytail.

An advantage of the present invention is that it provides a highly visible hair decoration complementing an existing elastic band or hair band.

Another advantage of the present invention is that it may conceal an existing elastic band or hair band.

A further advantage of the present invention is that it assists the elastic band or hair band in holding the hair and that the ponytail cord of the present invention and band assist each other in maintaining themselves in place on the ponytail.

An additional advantage of the present invention is that it is easy to use.

One more advantage of the present invention is that it stays securely in place.

Yet another advantage of the present invention is that it is inexpensive to manufacture.

Still another advantage of the present invention is that it may be used to accessorize an outfit.

5 A corollary advantage of the present invention is that the braided cord will not pull completely through the cord lock.

Another advantage of the present invention is that the multiple decorated ends decorate and accentuate the ponytail.

Brief Description of the Drawings

10 These and other details of my invention will be described in connection with the accompanying drawings, which are furnished only by way of illustration and not in limitation of the invention, and in which drawings:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the pair of braided ponytail cords of the present invention with the pair of braided ponytail cords interconnected in the middle of the cords
15 to form a double loop securable by a cord lock around the ponytail with multiple decorated unbraided ends hanging down from each strand on top of the ponytail;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the strong pair of braided ponytail cords of FIG. 1 interconnected in the middle of the cords to form a double loop secured by a cord lock around the ponytail with each braided cord of the double loop straddling the elastic band
20 of the ponytail with one braided strand on each side of the elastic band and multiple decorated unbraided ends hanging down from each strand on top of the ponytail.

Best Mode for Carrying Out the Invention

In FIGS. 1-2, a ponytail cord device 20 for securing around a ponytail 40 held with an elastic band or hair band 30 to assist in securing the ponytail 40 and provide decorative braided cord loops 21A and 21B and a multiplicity of unbraided ends for each braided cord with the unbraided ends hanging down with decorative elements, such as beads 29 on the unbraided ends, blending with the hanging hair of the ponytail 40. The device 20 comprises a pair of braided cords 21A and 21B each formed with multiple strands 23 (usually three or four) of elongated flexible linear elements braided together to form each of the pair of braided cords 21A and 21B.

The braided cords 21A and 21B are interconnected in the middle of the cords 21A and 21B by an interconnecting strand 24 or strands of an elongated flexible linear element to secure the pair of braided cords 21A and 21B together in the middle of the cords 21A and 21B. The interconnecting strand 24 may further comprise one or more decorative elements, such as decorative beads 29 strung on each of the unbraided cord ends 23. The braided cords 21A and 21B are adapted to form a double loop around a ponytail 40 held together by an elastic band or elasticized hair band 30 or bands, as shown in FIG. 2. Each of the pair of braided cords 21A and 21B of the double loop are adapted to straddle a securing elastic band 30 around a ponytail 40 with one of the pair of braided cords 21A and 21B on each side of the elastic band 30, as seen in FIG. 2.

Each end of each of the pair of braided cords 21A and 21B has a knot 22A from which the multiple strands 23 of elongated flexible linear elements extend individually in an unbraided array from each of two ends of each of the pair of braided cords 21A and

21B. The unbraided arrays are adapted to hang down a portion of the length of a ponytail 40 with the unbraided array of multiple strands 23 visible, as shown in FIG. 2. The multiple strands 23 of elongated flexible linear elements may be formed in a variety of visually different materials, colors, textures, lengths, thicknesses, weights, and patterns.

5 The ponytail cord device 20 further comprises one or more decorative elements 29, which have an unbraided strand receiving opening 29A therethrough. Each of the decorative elements 29 is adapted to receive one or more of the multiple strands 23 of the unbraided array through the unbraided strand receiving opening 29A. The multiple strands 23 are adapted to retain decorative elements 29 thereon, at the end each single
10 loose strand 23, so that the decorative elements 29 are visible, as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2. Each of the multiple strands 23 includes an enlarged portion, which preferably comprises a knot 22B tied therein at the end of the strand, for retaining the one or more decorative elements 29 thereon. A number of decorative elements 29 may be provided for each of the multiple strands 23. The decorative elements 29 may be any of a variety of sizes,
15 shapes, colors, textures, and materials, including decorative beads.

 The ponytail cord device 20 also comprises a cord lock 25, which has a braided cord receiving opening 25A therethrough, which is adapted to retain the pair of braided cords 21A and 21B through the braided cord receiving opening 25A. The cord lock 25 is adapted to slide along the pair of braided cords 21A and 21B with the braided cords 21A
20 and 21B formed in a double loop around a ponytail 40 and cinch the double loop to lock the double loop in place around a ponytail 40, as seen in FIG. 2. The cord lock 25 may

further comprise a securing means (spring-loaded button 26) to bind the cord lock 25 releasably to the pair of braided cords 21A and 21B.

In practice, a user would first secure their hair into a ponytail 40 with an elastic (rubber) band or elasticized hair band 30. The cord lock 25 of the decorative ponytail holder 20 would be slid towards the ends of the pair of braided cords 21A and 21B until the double loop created by the braided cords 21A and 21B is large enough to pull the ponytail 40 therethrough. The ponytail 40 would then be drawn through the double loop of the braided cords 21A and 21B, with the cord lock 25 located at the top of the ponytail 40. The cord lock 25 is then pushed along the pair of braided cords 21A and 21B, with the braided cords 21A and 21B forming a double loop around a ponytail 40, and cinched to lock the double loop in place around a ponytail 40 with the braided strands 21A and 21B straddling the band 30 with each braided strand on one side of the band 30. The multiple single loose strands 23 should lay on top of or mingle with the loose ends of the ponytail 40, as seen in FIG. 2. The cord lock 25 may further comprise a spring-loaded button 26, which would be pressed to release and move the cord lock 25.

It is understood that the preceding description is given merely by way of illustration and not in limitation of the invention and that various modifications may be made thereto without departing from the spirit of the invention as claimed.